

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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ACTION SS-25

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O 050931Z NOV 76

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0409

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 8891

EXDIS

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, US, KS

SUBJECT: HIGH LEVEL REACTIONS TO U.S. PRESS ALLEGATIONS
ON ILLICIT ROK LOBBYING

REF: (A) STATE 272206, (B) SEOUL 8838

1. I HAD THOUGHT THAT IT WOULD GO WITHOUT SAYING THAT WE WOULD VIGOROUSLY AND AGGRESSIVELY ATTACK NOTION THAT U.S.G. IS "COLLUDING" WITH PRESS IN ATTACKS ON PRESIDENT PARK; EVEN IF SPECIFICALLY NOT REPORTED REF B. CONSTANT EFFORTS BY THIS MISSION TO EXPLAIN REASONS FOR U.S. "NO-COMMENT" POLICY, HIGHLIGHTED BY MY TWO SESSIONS WITH FONMIN, HAVE BEEN DIRECTED AT THIS TARGET.

2. WE WILL OBVIOUSLY CONTINUE THIS EFFORT, AND DEPARTMENT CAN ASSUME WE ARE PRESSING OUR CASE HARD EVEN IF WE DON'T REPORT IT EVERY TIME WE MAKE THE EFFORT. OUR REPORTING IS DESIGNED TO PROVIDE DEPARTMENT, AS REQUESTED (STATE 269983), WITH LOCAL REACTION HERE SO THAT IT CAN BETTER UNDERSTAND ATMOSPHERE AND KOREAN PERCEPTIONS DESPITE OUR EFFORTS.

3. OUR KEY PROBLEM HERE IS DIFFICULTY KOREANS FIND, DESPITE OUR EXPLANATIONS, IN COMPREHENDING AMONG OTHER FACTORS OUR LEGAL SYSTEM, OUR COMPUNCTIONS ABOUT DENYING ANY INTELLIGENCE SPECULATION, WHETHER TRUE OR NOT, AND FREEDOM OF PRESS TO SPECULATE ON LINKS OF LOBBYING
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ACTIVITIES TO PRESIDENT PARK WITHOUT DENIALS. ALL ARE

ALIEN CONCEPTS TO KOREANS. AS ONE AMERICAN EDUCATED KOREAN EXPLAINED, "OUR REACTIONS ARE EMOTIONAL. WE ARE NO LONGER WELCOMED IN WASHINGTON." MISUNDERSTANDING OF U.S. POLICY HAS BEEN, IN MY JUDGMENT, CONTRIBUTED SIGNIFICANTLY TO BY AMBASSADOR HAHM, WHO, I ASSUME DEPARTMENT REALIZES, IS APPARENTLY ALLEGING "UNSYMPATHETIC" OFFICIAL ATTITUDE. KOREANS ALSO CITE TO US VERY OCCASIONAL DEPARTMENT VARIATIONS FROM "NO COMMENT" LINE TO WHICH WE QUICKLY POINT OUT DISTINCTION BETWEEN AREAS WE CAN AND CANNOT COMMENT ON. FINALLY, I NOW HAVE DOUBTS MY MESSAGE VIA FONMIN GOT THROUGH TO PRESIDENT PARK, ALTHOUGH FONMIN COINCIDENTALLY USED SAME "NO COMMENT" RESPONSE WHEN ASKED BY NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ABOUT KCIA ACTIVITIES IN U.S. I HOPE MY TALK WITH PRESIDENTIAL SECRETARY GENERAL KIM CHUNG YUM, REPORTED SEPTEL, CLOSED THIS COMMUNICATION GAP TO PRESIDENT PARK.

4. RECOMMENDATION: IN ADDITION TO EMBASSY EFFORTS, I WOULD SUGGEST THAT DEPARTMENT EMPHASIZE TO AMBASSADOR HAHM AS WELL U.S. POLICY TOWARDS KOREA AND SECURITY RELATIONSHIP WITH ROK REMAIN UNCHANGED.
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